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STATE FOR AF/W-EPLUMB AND INR/AA-BGRAVES

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SUBJECT: COTE D'IVOIRE: UNOCI A/SRSG ANALYZES POLITICAL  
SCENE

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES, A.I. VICKI HUDDLESTON FOR REASONS 1.4  
(B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) Summary. Acting United Nations Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI) Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) Abou Moussa underscored to Charge d'Affaires and Poloff August 9 the importance of the "balance" that the U.S. provides on the Ivorian political scene. Moussa said UNOCI is attempting to determine how it will "support" the Ouagadougou Political Accord (OPA) implementation and "assist" the OPA facilitator as directed by UN Security Council resolution 1765. Moussa stated that the UN is not authorized to take the actions necessary to reach the OPA benchmarks, but can only state if the process is being carried out properly. Moussa expressed concern that the Ivorian Government may take "shortcuts" to accomplish these benchmarks and that the political opposition is not fully engaged in OPA implementation. According to Moussa, for technical reasons, elections cannot take place before March 2008. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Acting UNOCI SRSG Abou Moussa told Charge and Poloff August 9 that the "balance" the United States is viewed as providing on the Ivorian political scene is important in this "complex environment." Moussa noted that the international community has been actively seeking a solution to Cote d'Ivoire's political impasse for some time without any success. He explained that the UN was not involved in the negotiation of the OPA, although it was consulted by the facilitator, Burkina Faso President Blaise Compaore, because President Gbagbo and Prime Minister Soro wanted it to be an Ivorian process. Moussa said UNOCI is trying to define UN Security Council 1765 instruction that UNOCI should provide "support" to the OPA's implementation and "assistance" to OPA facilitator and Burkina Faso President Blaise Compaore.

¶3. (C) Moussa told the Charge that the key issues that have to be resolved to fully implement the OPA, such as disarmament and integration of the armed forces, have not yet occurred. He noted that UN Security Council resolutions regarding Cote d'Ivoire do not give the UN the power to effect these benchmarks, but only provide for the UN to state if the process is carried out correctly. Moussa expressed concern that the Ivorian Government will seek "shortcuts" to accomplish these goals and not conduct them properly. Moussa said that, for technical reasons, elections cannot take place before March 2008. He said President Gbagbo knows that elections cannot be held in December 2007, but called for them in his August 6 speech to counter allegations that he does not support the holding of elections. According to Moussa, Prime Minister Soro's independence has been reduced since he assumed that office because he cannot take any action that Gbagbo disapproves of since Gbagbo must sign all decrees. Soro may also have lost support in the north because

he has not delivered on the identity cards.

¶4. (C) Moussa expressed concern that the political opposition is not fully engaged in the peace process. He stated that the opposition political parties do not engage in public constructive criticism of the government, but expect the international community to do so for them. Moussa suggested that "key" Embassies should encourage the government and the opposition to engage in dialogue regarding implementation of the OPA. He noted that the opposition utilizes the OPA's Permanent Framework for Consultation (CPC) to raise issues that Gbagbo, Soro, and Compaore view as already decided by the OPA. Moussa added that opposition political party leaders are angry at the international community because a UN Security Council delegation that traveled to Cote d'Ivoire in June 2007 did not meet with them and because UN Security Council Resolution 1765 terminated the mandate of the High Representative for the Elections, provided for in the Pretoria Peace Agreement. Moussa said UNOCI is engaged with the opposition to attempt to allay their fears regarding implementation of the OPA and to assure them that their concerns will be taken into account as the process moves forward.

¶5. (C) Comment: Abou Moussa had just returned from meeting with the Minister of Defense and opposition leaders Bedie and Ouattara. He was candid and open in his assessment of the peace process, especially the fact that the opposition refusal to engage and Soro's loss of support have advanced Gbagbo's status and prospects.  
HUDDLESTON